

IN THE CLAIMS

*The status of the claims as presently amended is as follows:*

1. *(Currently Amended)* An image forming apparatus comprising:

inputting means for inputting images;

image forming means for forming images on blank sheets based on the input images;

stacking means for stacking a plurality of bundles of insert sheets, wherein each bundle has a plurality of pages which are to be inserted between the sheets having images formed thereon by said image forming means, in a predetermined order of pages in which the insert sheets are to be inserted, and wherein the insert sheets in each of the bundles are not all the same;

inserter means for feeding the stacked insert sheets so as to be inserted between said sheets having images formed thereon;

reading means for reading identification information assigned to the insert sheets and generating an output indicating the read identification information;

designating means for designating at least one insertion position in said sheets having images formed thereon for insertion of at least one of the insert sheets by said inserter means;

detecting means for detecting based on the output of said reading means whether or not the insert sheet fed is for a top page in one of the bundles of insert sheets; and

discharging means operable when said detecting means detects that the insert sheet fed by said inserter means after a printing start instruction has been given is not the insert sheet for the top page, for discharging insert sheets onto an escape tray until the insert sheet for the top page is detected by said detecting means.

2. *(Previously Presented)* An image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said stacking means comprises a plurality of trays for stacking said plurality of insert sheets in a divided manner, the image forming apparatus further comprising selecting means capable of selecting between two types of stacking modes consisting of a first stacking mode in which a same type of insert sheets are stacked on each of said plurality of trays and a second stacking mode in which plural types of insert sheets are stacked in order in which they are inserted on each of said plurality of trays, and wherein said discharging means discharges insert sheets while said second stacking mode is selected by said selecting means.

3. *(Original)* An image forming apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising post-

processing means for stacking said sheets having images formed thereon by said image forming means in a fashion mixed with insert sheets inserted by said inserter means, and for carrying out post-processing on the mixedly stacked sheets.

4. (*Original*) An image forming apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said discharging means discharges said insert sheets to a location other than said post-processing means.

5. (*Original*) An image forming apparatus according to claim 1, comprising a conveyance path for insert sheets, and wherein said detecting means is provided on said conveyance path for insert sheets.

6. (*Currently Amended*) An image forming apparatus comprising:

inputting means for inputting images;

image forming means for forming images on blank sheets based on the input images;

stacking means for stacking a plurality of bundles of insert sheets, wherein each bundle has a plurality of pages which are to be inserted between the sheets having images formed thereon by said image forming means, in a predetermined order of pages in which the insert sheets are to be inserted, and wherein the insert sheets in each of the bundles are not all the same;

inserter means for performing a sheet inserting operation to feed the stacked insert sheets so as to be inserted between said sheets having images formed thereon;

reading means for reading identification information assigned to the insert sheets and generating an output indicating the read identification information;

designating means for designating at least one insertion position in said sheets having images formed thereon for insertion of at least one of the insert sheets by said inserter means;

interrupting means for interrupting the sheet inserting operation of said inserter means when at least one of the insert sheets has jammed while being subjected to the sheet inserting operation by said inserter means;

detecting means for detecting based on the output of said reading means whether or not the insert-sheet fed is for a top page in one of the bundles of insert sheets; and

discharging means operable when said detecting means detects that the insert sheet fed first by said inserter means after a restart of the sheet inserting operation is not the insert sheet for the top page for discharging insert sheets onto an escape tray until the insert sheet for the

top page is detected, and for further discharging insert sheets onto the escape tray up to an insert sheet immediately preceding a same page of insert sheet as the at least one jammed insert sheet.

7. *(Previously Presented)* An image forming apparatus according to claim 6, for stacking said plurality of insert sheets in a divided manner, the image forming apparatus further comprising selecting means capable of selecting between two types of stacking modes consisting of a first stacking mode in which a same type of insert sheets are stacked on each of said plurality of trays and a second stacking mode in which plural types of insert sheets are stacked in order in which they are inserted on each of said plurality of trays, and wherein said discharging means discharges insert sheets while said second stacking mode is selected by said selecting means.

8. *(Original)* An image forming apparatus according to claim 6, further comprising post-processing means for stacking said sheets having images formed thereon by said image forming means in a fashion mixed with insert sheets inserted by said inserter means, and for carrying out post-processing on the mixedly stacked sheets.

9. *(Original)* An image forming apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said discharging means discharges said insert sheets to a location other than said post-processing means.

10. *(Original)* An image forming apparatus according to claim 6, comprising a conveyance path for insert sheets, and wherein said detecting means is provided on said conveyance path for insert sheets.

11-13. *(Canceled)*

14. *(Currently Amended)* A control method of controlling an image forming apparatus, comprising the steps of:

inputting images by inputting means;

forming images on blank sheets based on the input images by image forming means;

feeding insert sheets from a plurality of bundles of insert sheets stacked by stacking means, wherein each bundle has a plurality of pages which are to be inserted between the sheets having images formed thereon by said image forming means, in a predetermined order

of pages in which the insert sheets are to be inserted, and wherein the insert sheets in each of the bundles are not all the same;

feeding the stacked insert sheets by inserter means between the sheets having images formed thereon by said image forming means;

reading identification information assigned to the insert sheets and generating an output indicating the read identification information by reading means;

designating at least one insertion position in said sheets having images formed thereon for insertion of at least one of the insert sheets by said inserter means, by designating means;

detecting based on the output of said reading means by detecting means whether or not the insert sheet fed is for a top page in one of the bundles of insert sheets; and

discharging insert sheets by discharging means onto an escape tray until the insert sheet for the top page is detected when said detecting means detects that the insert sheet fed by said inserter means after a print start instruction has been given is not the insert sheet for the top page.

15. *(Previously Presented)* A control method according to claim 14, wherein said stacking means comprises a plurality of trays for stacking said plurality of insert sheets in a divided manner, the control method further comprising a step of selecting by selecting means between two types of stacking modes consisting of a first stacking mode in which a same type of insert sheets are stacked on each of said plurality of trays and a second stacking mode in which plural types of insert sheets are stacked in order in which they are inserted on each of said plurality of trays, and wherein said discharging step is executed while said second stacking mode is selected by said selecting means.

16. *(Original)* A control method according to claim 14, further comprising the steps of stacking said sheets having images formed thereon by said image forming means in a fashion mixed with insert sheets inserted by said inserter means, and carrying out post-processing on the mixedly stacked sheets, by post-processing means.

17. *(Original)* A control method according to claim 16, wherein said discharging step comprises discharging said insert sheets to a location other than said post-processing means.

18. *(Original)* A control method according to claim 14, wherein said detecting means is provided

on a conveyance path for insert sheets.

19. (*Currently Amended*) A control method of controlling an image forming apparatus, comprising the steps of:

inputting images by inputting means;

forming images on blank sheets based on the input images by image forming means;

feeding insert sheets from a plurality of bundles of insert sheets stacked by stacking means, wherein each bundle has a plurality of pages which are to be inserted between the sheets having images formed thereon by said image forming means, in a predetermined order of pages in which the insert sheets are to be inserted, and wherein the insert sheets in each of the bundles are not all the same;

performing a sheet inserting operation by inserter means to feed the stacked insert sheets so as to be inserted between the sheets having images formed thereon by said image forming means;

reading identification information assigned to the insert sheets and generating an output indicating the read identification information by reading means;

designating at least one insertion position in said sheets having images formed thereon for insertion of at least one of the insert sheets by said inserter means, by designating means;

interrupting the sheet inserting operation of said inserter means by interrupting means when at least one of the insert sheets has jammed while being subjected to the sheet inserting operation by said inserter means;

detecting based on the output of said reading means whether or not the insert sheet fed is for a top page in one of the bundles of insert sheets by detecting means; and

discharging insert sheets onto an escape tray until the insert sheet for the top page is detected, and further discharging insert sheets onto the escape tray up to an insert sheet immediately preceding a same page of insert sheet as the at least one jammed insert sheet, by discharging means, when said detecting means detects that the insert sheet fed first by said inserter means after a restart of the sheet inserting operation is not the insert sheet for the top page.

20. (*Previously Presented*) A control method according to claim 19, wherein said stacking means comprises a plurality of trays for stacking said plurality of insert sheets in a divided manner, the control method further comprising a step of selecting by selecting means between

two types of stacking modes consisting of a first stacking mode in which a same type of insert sheets are stacked on each of said plurality of trays and a second stacking mode in which plural types of insert sheets are stacked in order in which they are inserted on each of said plurality of trays, and wherein said discharging step is executed while said second stacking mode is selected by said selecting means.

21. (*Original*) A control method according to claim 19, further comprising the steps of stacking said sheets having images formed thereon by said image forming means in a fashion mixed with insert sheets inserted by said inserter means, and carrying out post-processing on the mixedly stacked sheets, by post-processing means.

22. (*Original*) A control method according to claim 21, wherein said discharging step comprises discharging said insert sheets to a location other than said post-processing means.

23. (*Original*) A control method according to claim 19, wherein said detecting means is provided on a conveyance path for insert sheets.

24-39. (*Canceled*)

40. (*Previously Presented*) An image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said reading means reads code information that is the identification information assigned to the insert sheets.

41. (*Previously Presented*) An image forming apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said reading means reads code information that is the identification information assigned to the insert sheets.

42. (*Previously Presented*) An image forming apparatus according to claim 40, wherein the code information is a bar code.

43. (*Previously Presented*) An image forming apparatus according to claim 41, wherein the code information is a bar code.

44. (*Previously Presented*) An image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said reading means reads a page number that is the identification information assigned to the insert sheets.

45. (*Previously Presented*) An image forming apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said reading means reads a page number that is the identification information assigned to the insert sheets.